EVNA: A Look Back at 2012
By Rob Cox, EVNA Board Secretary

It has been a very busy year for the Castro/Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association. The Board of Directors, which meets on the second Wednesday of each month, has had a mostly full docket throughout 2012.

EVNA has been a sounding board for many issues from the trivial to the crucial.

The Planning Committee, for instance, has been kept busy with several large development projects. All of them will have a lasting impact on the quality of life of the neighborhood. The Committee also reviewed a number of renovations or expansions of residences that neighbors had problems with, provided input to the Board on commercial developments, and began to craft Residential Design Guidelines specific to Castro/Eureka Valley. Among the major projects that had EVNA’s input:

*376 Castro at 17th (the former Arco station site), residential project

*2175 Market at 15th, residential project (100% rental units)

*2299 Market at 16th and Noe, residential project (the “hole in the ground)

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About EVNA

EVNA Mission

Castro/Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association (EVNA), formed in 1881 as the Eureka Valley Promotion Association (EVPA), provides a public forum for the people who live, work, and play in the greater Eureka Valley area to discuss common issues and concerns and help develop solutions to improve the neighborhood.

Goals of EVNA

• Protect and enhance the character of the neighborhood, its historic resources and significant topographic features and open space

• Ensure that growth, development, and public access are compatible with and meet the needs of residents and the business community

• Protect and improve public health and safety

• Encourage friendly association among neighbors and businesses

• Provide an educational forum and community outreach to community partners

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The Café is committed to ensuring that the Castro has a vibrant and active nightlife and a peaceful neighborhood.

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*2001 Market at Dolores, residential project and Whole Foods market

To get involved with the EVNA Planning Committee contact us at the website, evna.org or email Planning@evna.org.

The Eureka! ran several historical articles over the course of the year. We find that these historical pieces help to keep the sense of how Eureka Valley has evolved. We profiled several historic houses and businesses and at one of our Public Meetings local historian Rich Brandt presented a slide show of how Upper Market has developed over the past century and longer.

This year we also introduced a column called “Neighbors’ Faves.” It also provides an opportunity for our members to share a few reasons why they love the Castro/Eureka Valley neighborhood. To submit a Neighbors’ Fave contact Rob Cox via the website at evna.org

EVNA took a lead role in several quality of life issues this year. These are never easy issues to tackle as EVNA strives to strike a balance with the busy commercial areas rubbing shoulders with the adjoining residential areas. The Castro/Eureka Valley is a tight blend of both, and overall does a remarkable job of coexisting.

Issues that we wrestled with this year include:

* Working to rein in the nightclub Trigger which was constantly in violation of its conditions of use (CU’s).

* Building a coalition of residents, the City of San Francisco and some of the Castro’s bars and clubs to install a gate at the parking lot in the 400 block of Castro. The lot had become a public nuisance. Since the gate has been put up the problems of late night parties and gang activity have subsided considerably.

* Deliberation for a long time about what to do about the Naked Guys at Jane Warner Plaza and around the village. In September this was the main topic at our Public Meeting. In the end, EVNA voted to support Supervisor Weiner’s legislation restricting nudity in public places.

* Attempting to regularize the parklet in front of the Squat & Gobble restaurant, an on-again off-again annoyance. According to the rules laid out for a parklet it cannot be an extension of the business with which it is associated. However, Squat & Gobble has used this public parklet as an almost proprietary space. EVNA has been working with the City to either amend the rules or stop Squat and Gobble from annexing a public parklet.

Other accomplishments:

* Under our bylaws EVNA manages the maintenance of the Pink Triangle Park along with help from the City. The actual work is accomplished through the efforts of volunteer gardeners Jack Keating, Justin del Versano, and Ed Scruggs.

* Although EVNA took no official position, we provided a forum for discussion about Second Hand Smoke legislation.

* This year EVNA has asked SFPD to contribute a column in the Eureka! newsletter giving us updates from Mission Police Station.

* EVNA provided a public forum for a group proposing a memorial at Harvey Milk Plaza memorializing LGBT Veterans.

* Supervisor Weiner attended two of our public meetings to brief neighbors about his agendas and legislative proposals. These visits also enabled residents and businesses to speak with him about neighborhood concerns.

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Neighbors share some of their favorite things and places in the Castro/Eureka Valley.

To submit your Fave, e-mail evna.org. This month Patrick Crogan shares some of his Faves.

**The Randal Museum**

It isn’t far from Castro & Market & is a real eye-opener with amazing views. (Google the museum for hours, exhibits & events.) Go one block up the hill on Castro from Market Street, make a left on States Street & walk about three blocks to 171 States Street. Make a right there onto the paved path & follow it up the ramp to the museum.

**Noe & Market Laundromat**

It’s across from Cafe Flore has been a constant destination for the neighborhood. Solar powered too! Linda is the manager who keeps everything clean & running. Do your laundry while having coffee and people watching at the Cafe.

**Ixia**

This flower shop on Market near Castro has been a visual mainstay for the neighborhood for ever. Gary, Jaime, Will & David are really nice & helpful. They have a great selection of flowers, plus it’s fun just to go in there to a different visual world.

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*EVNA hosted SF Energy Corp to present information to neighbors. SF Energy Coop is aimed at providing the benefits of green energy to everyone, thereby to speeding up our transition to renewable energy as a society and teach people that everyone can own a piece of the future of energy.

*The Eureka! newsletter included announcements that kept Eureka Valley denizens informed about neighborhood goings-on. Some of those announcements included the radar trailer on 17th and Corbin; the installation of a plaque at Jane Warner Plaza; the Harvey Milk School Auction and fundraiser.

*This year EVNA increased the amount of advertising in the newsletter, thereby enabling us to increase newsletter circulation by about 1,000 neighbors.

*EVNA worked closely with SFPD and the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence to publicize safety and community focus for Pink Saturday and Pride Weekend.

Overall it has been a busy year for EVNA. The Board wants to thank all of those involved and all of those who endeavor to make the Castro/Eureka Valley one of the best and most vibrant neighborhoods in San Francisco.

To get involved with EVNA, contact us at our website, evna.org, or write to us at Eureka Valley Neighborhood Association, PO Box 14137, San Francisco, CA 94114-0137

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**The Castro Market, the Highs and Lows**

by Daniel Risman-Jones, Board Member of EVNA

Location, location, location is what it is all about in real estate and no group of people knows that better than those who live in the Castro. With abundant public transit options via MUNI buses and trains, quick access to freeways, a plethora of local tech shuttles, as well as short walking distance to top City dining and entertainment establishments, the Castro easily out-ranks many other City neighborhoods in terms of walkability and desirability. The growing number of new buildings being constructed in the Upper Market area is clear evidence of the intense interest in the Castro.

Along with desirability, though, comes a price tag and that has become all too clear for people wanting to live in the Castro over the past year. Whereas over the past several years, buyers had many options throughout SF and the Castro, inventory has dried up, turning the local housing economy into a seller’s market.

Owners in the neighborhood have enjoyed a particularly good year in terms of residential real estate. Prices have skyrocketed all over the Bay Area, the Castro being near the heart of it. Over the past 12 months, we have seen a drastic increase of 20% in single-family home values if looking squarely at price per square foot ($/sqft). The increase in condo value over the last year was almost 11%. Investors in buildings over the last year saw their multi-unit

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Spot Zoning for FitnessSF and Cafe Flore?
by Judith Hoyem, Chair, EVNA Planning Committee

District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener has initiated legislation to change the zoning of Upper Market from a Neighborhood Commercial District (NCD) to a Neighborhood Commercial Transit District (NCTD), including two zoning exceptions (“spot zoning”) for the benefit of two popular businesses in the Castro: FitnessSF (formerly known as Gold’s Gym) and Cafe Flore. The legislation would enable FitnessSF, located at the SW corner of Market and Noe Streets, to add an additional floor to the gym and two additional floors of rental housing to a height of 65 feet. The existing two-story gym is 25 feet in height and is currently zoned for a maximum of 50 feet. Under the legislation, the rest of the intersection would remain zoned for 50 feet. The same legislation would legalize an illegal kitchen that Cafe Flore, located at the NE corner of Market and Noe Street, has been operating off-site in the rear of a building at 258 Noe Street, which is not currently zoned for a restaurant. Cafe Flore has a small legal kitchen on-site as well.

Benefits and consequences for residents, other businesses, the general environment and parking and traffic of the up-zoning of the site of FitnessSF have not been evaluated as yet. Supervisor Wiener did not consult with the neighborhood organizations and held no community meetings before fast-tracking the legislation for presentation to the Planning Commission on November 29 in order to finalize it with the Board of Supervisors before the end of the year. However, the Commission hearing date has now been pushed forward to February 21, 2013, to give time for community input.

The owners of FitnessSF claim that the gym is over-crowded and that they cannot afford to expand it without two floors of rental housing income. They have a concept for the building but have not submitted full plans yet. According to the concept, the existing parking for the gym would remain for the use of the gym only and would not be expanded. No parking would be provided for the rental housing. It is unknown whether or not any of the rental housing would be kept affordable; that is, below market rate.

Among the considerations for the impact of a individual height increase for the FitnessSF site is that the intersection corners and the mid-block from Noe to Castro along Market Street would remain zoned for a maximum of 50 feet in height. The building immediately adjacent to the site is just 25 feet tall, as are many of the other small-scale historic properties on the west side of the street. A 65-foot building would create a problematical 40-foot blank wall facing west. Across the street on the NW corner of Market and Noe Streets, the historic apartment building is 56 feet at its highest point. On the south corner, the new 18-unit residential building at 2299 Market between Noe and 16th Streets, which is almost complete, is 50 feet in height (5 stories). Thus, a 65-foot building at Noe and Market Streets would arguably be out-of-scale with the rest of the intersection. Another question is what the impact would be on the small-scale eligible Historic Commercial District to the west.

It is EVNA’s position that a unique up-zoning for this site should not be under consideration before there is an evaluation of potential impacts of the project by the Planning Department and their mitigation, as well as the potential benefits of the project to the community, which would require that the plan be developed, a pre-application meeting be held for community input, and a permit application be submitted to the Planning Department for review, all of which is normal procedure. After thorough review including community input, if the height increase is deemed warranted, it would be proper for special legislation then to be considered.

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Cafe Flore first opened in 1973 and quickly became a beloved neighborhood gathering place. The present ownership purchased the Cafe in 2003 and has gradually expanded its service from a cafe with a limited menu to one with additional food service and a full liquor license in 2005 and, in 2007, expanded hours of operation and amplified entertainment. A brunch and dinner menu was added in January 2010. However, it had been operating an illegal kitchen off-site for some time in order to expand its menu of offerings. The owner claims that his business would be hurt without the capacity to serve an extensive menu of meals and that the small on-site kitchen is inadequate, although its equipment, plumbing and electrical work were upgraded in 2010. He had claimed financial hardship and threatened closure in 2007 when he applied to serve food 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with amplified music until 2 am. The permits were granted without addressing the issue of the illegal kitchen and Cafe Flore continued. The off-site kitchen is located at a building also owned by the owner of Cafe Flore.

While Cafe Flore continues to be a popular venue in the Castro and no one wants to lose it, there are questions about whether it is necessary for it to operate a kitchen off site in order to stay in business. Granting a special exception to this one business may confer an unfair advantage that is not accorded to other businesses or may set a precedent that such exceptions are available to one who knowingly operates illegally. Among the other concerns regarding legalizing the off-site kitchen is whether the zoning status at Noe would convert to a potential restaurant site and how that would affect other nearby restaurants. Containment of nuisance and odors are also questions.

EVNA opposes the inclusion of the legalization of an illegal kitchen in this zoning legislation. It is a separate issue and should be dealt with separately.

Please let us hear from you on these issues at board@evna.org

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Annual Castro Christmas Tree Ceremony

On Monday, November 26, 2012 the Castro’s annual Christmas tree lighting took place. The annual tree lighting ceremony is sponsored by Merchants of Upper Market and Castro (MUMC). As usual the ceremony was a festive event, with holiday music and carols. Attending the ceremony were Santa and his elves, Mayor Ed Lee, Supervisor Scott Wiener, and other City officials. The traditional glittery blessings were made by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

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(About EVNA from page 1)

* Attend bi-monthly public meetings to meet other members and find out more about the organization.

* Attend a Board meeting to find out if you would like to participate in setting policies and selecting agenda for the Association. The Board consists of 12 active members. It meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 7 pm. Email board@evna.org if you would like to attend a meeting of the Board.

* Attend a Planning Committee meeting to find out if you would like to participate in monitoring land use issues in the Castro and Eureka Valley and implementing EVNA’s land use goals. The Planning Committee currently consists of 8 active members. It meets on the first Wednesday of every month at 7 pm. Email planning@evna.org if you would like to attend a meeting of the Planning Committee.

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Changing the Rules for CEQA
by Judith Hoyem, Chair, Planning Committee

CEQA (see-kwa), the California Environmental Quality Act, was enacted in 1970 as a statewide policy of environmental protection, including protection for historic properties. The rules under which it is implemented are left to state and local agencies, which are required to follow certain protocols of analysis and public disclosure of environmental impacts of proposed land use projects and to mitigate them.

The need to update some of the procedures and rules of CEQA that San Francisco follows is a widely shared opinion among land use professionals, some of whom are developers, their attorneys, and organizations promoting growth; others of whom are preservationists, environmentalists, their attorneys and organizations; and others who are neutral observers, advisers and specialists.

Supervisor Scott Wiener unilaterally introduced legislation in October changing some of the procedures of CEQA for San Francisco without consultation with stakeholders, land use professionals, or members of his District 8 constituency. There was an almost immediate outcry from those who saw the changes as exclusively favoring efficiency in development over the ability of the public to appeal when the environment or historic properties seem in jeopardy. There was general consternation over the difficulty in comprehending the legislation and its vagueness in certain areas. Among the organizations that submitted penetrating analyses of the legislation were the Sierra Club, SF Architectural Heritage, and San Francisco Tomorrow. After hearing over two hours of public comment on the intricacy of the proposed changes at the Planning Commission hearing on November 29, 2012, the Commissioners, who were troubled themselves by various aspects of the legislation, unanimously requested that Supervisor Wiener delay the scheduled Board of Supervisors hearing and meet with the many well-informed members of the public to address their concerns, to listen to their suggested changes, and work with them on revising the legislation, and then bring the revised legislation back to the Commission in the new year. No timeframe was set. The Historic Preservation Commission, which met the following week, concurred with the Planning Commission. It must be noted that Supervisor Wiener is not obligated to follow the Commissioners’ suggestions but it is likely that he will do so.

At our January Public Meeting we will accept nominations from members for EVNA's Board of Directors for a two-year term. Nominees must have been a member of EVNA for six months and live, work or volunteer in the neighborhood. If you are interested in serving on the Board of EVNA, please contact me for more information, Alan.Beach@EVNA.org or 415.431.5152.

Current nominees:

Mary Edna Harrell, returning Board Member, has enjoyed living in the Eureka Valley/Castro Neighborhood since 1986. The diversity and quality of life here are important to her. As a member of the EVNA Board she would endeavor to maintain and enhance this quality for both commercial and residential constituents.

Mark D McHale has lived and worked in San Francisco since 1990, and enjoys a successful real estate practice with Herth Real Estate. He is a member of MUMC and has dedicated many volunteer hours in service to the community. Mark is looking forward to joining the team on the EVNA Board, and is committed to making our neighborhood safe, vibrant and enjoyable for all who live and visit here.

Dan Risman Jones, returning Board Member, is excited to serve for another term on the EVNA Board. Over the past year he has been active in both the newsletter and planning committees. He has lived in the neighborhood and currently works in the neighborhood. He is also an active volunteer as a Castro City Guide Tour Leader.
Market Street Development Updates
by Gary Weiss, Planning Committee member

**2278 Market** between Noe and Sanchez (Tower Records site): CVS Pharmacy has submitted an application to the Planning Department for the ground floor except for Radio Shack. They have agreed to improve the facade, to be closed from 11PM to 7AM, and not to sell alcoholic beverages.

They will present their plans to DTNA and EVNA in January.

**NEW! 2198 Market @Sanchez** (Christmas tree lot): Just proposed. 87 units. 7 stories. 81 feet at the corner, stepping down to 40 feet on Sanchez. 35 parking spaces, including 2 car share, 87 bicycle spaces. Will be submitted to Planning Department this month.

**Market @Sanchez**, SW corner (Industrialists): Starbucks is seeking this site for its third coffee shop in the Castro/UpperMarket area. The neighborhood merchants group(MUMC) and other neighborhood groups (EVNA and DTNA) are opposed.

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**Properties increase 10% in value.**

Due to its desirability and central location, the Eureka Valley market has increased in value more than the San Francisco market as a whole. Homes increased by 13% more than the average in the City, while condos increased by 2% more and multi-unit buildings by 8% more.

With a large quantity of housing being built in Upper Market and many more retail spaces opening up alongside them, we can expect that the neighborhood will continue to remain desirable. In a follow up article, we will discuss the local rental market and changes it has undergone.

**Featured Home: 4674 19th St.** This Castro home sold in March of this year for $900,500. The 1,206 sq. ft. property has two bedrooms, one bath, a bonus suite, views and wonderful outdoor space. This year ten homes sold in Eureka Valley for less than a million dollars ranging from one to four bedrooms.

**Featured Condo: 29 Hartford St**

Right in the heart of the Castro, this quintessential Victorian condo sold for $840,000 in June and features three bedrooms, one bath, and 1,324 sq. ft. This year, 29 condos sold in Eureka Valley for less than $1,000,000 ranging from one to four bedrooms.
Happy New Year from Castro/EVNA!

As my third year as President of EVNA, and 6th year on the board, winds down, I am reminded of how grateful I am to all of you in the neighborhood for your commitment to making “The Sunny Heart of San Francisco” the best neighborhood to live in the City. Working together, we make this little part of the city an amazing place to live, work and play. Thank you!

HOT TOPICS

• Castro Street Sidewalk Widening Project: District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener has secured funding via the $248 million City Streets Bond to finally fulfill the long desired widening and beautification of Castro Street sidewalks. This Winter the Planning Department – in conjunction with the Department of Public Works and SFMTA – will be leading a community process to develop a streetscape design for Castro Street between Market and 19th Streets. The first of two public workshops will be on Wednesday, January 23, 2013 – from 6pm to 8pm at the Eureka Valley Recreation Center’s auditorium. To receive project updates, sign-up for the project’s mailing list at: http://signup.sfplanning.org. For more information please contact: Nick Perry, San Francisco Planning Department, (415) 575 9066 | nicholas.perry@sfgov.org

• Board Election: At our January Public Meeting we will accept nominations from members for EVNA’s Board of Directors for a two-year term. Nominees must have been a member of EVNA for six months and live, work or volunteer in the neighborhood. If you are interested in serving on the Board of EVNA, please contact me for more information, Alan.Beach@EVNA.org, 415.431.5152. [See Page 8 for Current nominees.

• THANK YOU Diane Termini: As we elect new board members in January, I would like to thank Diane Termini who is retiring from the Board for her amazing commitment and service to the neighborhood.